

REMARKS

Reconsideration of the instant application is respectfully requested. The present amendment is responsive to the Office Action of December 22, 2003, in which claims 1-16 were previously pending. Of those, claims 15 and 16 have been withdrawn from consideration as being directed to a non-elected invention.

Of the remaining claims, claims 8-14 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter regarded as the invention. With regard to the art of record, claims 1 and 8 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by or, in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being obvious over under U.S. Patent 5,266,505 to Ahgren, et al. Claims 1 and 8 have also been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by or, in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being obvious over under U.S. Patent 6,562,547 to Kraft, et al.

However, claims 2-7 have been objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Moreover, it has further been indicated by the Examiner that the incorporation of similar subject matter from claim 2 into claim 8 (as well as correction of the §112 rejections) would render claim 8 and the claims dependent therefrom allowable over the art of record. For the following reasons, it is respectfully submitted that the application is now in condition for allowance.

As an initial matter, the Applicants affirm the election of group I, claims 1-14, for further prosecution on the merits.

Claims 1 and 9 have been cancelled, while claim 2 has been rewritten in independent form to include all of the elements of claim 1. In addition, claim 8 has been amended as indicated above to include the limitations of now cancelled claim 9 (similar

to claim 2), as well as to correct the §112 rejections. In addition, claims 10 and 14 are amended to change the dependencies thereof to claim 8.

Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that the both the §102 and §103 rejections of each of the remaining have been overcome, and it is respectfully requested that the same be withdrawn.

For the above stated reasons, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is now in condition for allowance. No new matter has been entered and no additional fees are believed to be required. However, if any fees are due with respect to this Amendment, please charge them to Deposit Account No. 09-0458 maintained by Applicant's attorneys.

Respectfully submitted,
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Date: March 11, 2004
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